

Police Records: An Intermedia Genre

Cristina Vatulescu

The Oxford Handbook of Law and Humanities

Edited by Simon Stern, Maksymilian Del Mar, and Bernadette Meyler

Print Publication Date: Dec 2019

Subject: Law, Jurisprudence and Philosophy of Law, Law and Society

Online Publication Date: Jan 2020 DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190695620.013.34

Abstract and Keywords

This chapter approaches police records as a genre that gains from being considered in its relationships with other genres of writing. In particular, we will follow its long-standing relationship to detective fiction, the novel, and biography. Going further, the chapter emphasizes the intermedia character of police records not just in our time but also throughout their existence, indeed from their very origins. This approach opens to a more inclusive media history of police files. We will start with an analysis of the seminal late nineteenth-century French manuals prescribing the writing of a police file, the famous Bertillon-method manuals. We will then track their influence following their adoption nationally and internationally, with particular attention to the politics of their adoption in the colonies. We will also touch briefly on the relationship of early policing to other disciplines, such as anthropology and statistics, before moving to a closer look at its intersections with photography and literature.

Keywords: police records: history of, genre of writing, visual and intermedia aspects of, adoption in the colonies, identification, criminal identity, Alphonse Bertillon

THE subtitle of this chapter may surprise readers: why intermedia? “Intermedia” is a term first introduced in the art world in 1965 by Dick Higgins, to praise the kind of art that takes place not just within one medium but between mediums, such as Marcel Duchamp’s experiments.¹ In the meantime, intermedia has stretched to include art and other practices that happen between different mediums, technologies, and, crucially for our purposes, disciplines. Intermedia is thus broader than mixed media, which is usually restricted to visual arts. Whereas multimedia is generally tied to the computer platform, intermedia is more wide-ranging. It is critical to me that intermedia emphasizes the *interaction* between the mediums, technologies, and disciplines at play, not just their juxtaposition or concatenation. My argument in this chapter is that the modern police file emerged in the late nineteenth century as a genre that was defined by the tightly controlled interaction among words, photographic images, and numbers. The interaction could not be more intense, as each of these mediums had failed on its own to respond to the police file’s new challenge: the identification of repeat criminals.² A testimony to this interaction

is not just the patently intermedia police file but also its baffling intermedia components, such as the *spoken portrait* and the standardly *marked-up* mugshot. These word-and-image conglomerates were matched by a whole apparatus of reading human beings and archiving that translated images into words and numbers.

The birth of the modern police file, as standardized in the Bertillon manuals studied in section 44.1, is a key episode in the history of how mediums came to interact and to be yoked together in the representation of the human in modernity. Indeed, the Bertillon police files came closest to the definition of “intermedium” given in the first (p. 800) coinage of the word, in 1812, by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.³ These police files were indeed “an intermedium between person and personification,” that is to say a particular type of representation of a human being.⁴ In Coleridge’s case, this was “a narrative allegory.”⁵ In Bertillon’s, this intermedium was the police file—the new type of representation that was mandated to double up as identification. These intermedia relations and technologies of the early police file have strong contemporary consequences, whether we recognize their echoes or not. As Mark Maguire has shown, “beyond the apparent newness of [contemporary biometric security], key biometric technologies owe their origins to 19th-century deployments and then as now they may be understood as a form of bio-governmentality in which the security of identity opens possibilities for population control.”⁶

44.1 The Birth of the Modern Police Record: Bertillon-Method Manuals

Walter Benjamin wrote that the challenge of identifying a criminal shielded by the anonymity of the modern masses “is at the origin of the detective story.”⁷ Unprecedented mobility and the resulting elusiveness of criminal identities in the modern metropolis were also at the origin of modern criminology, a discipline that developed in the late nineteenth century around identification.⁸ In the 1870s, pioneering criminologist Alphonse Bertillon proposed a method for identifying criminals that synthesized many of criminology’s early advances, prejudices, and fantasies. His police records combined mugshots, anthropometric measurements of the body, the verbal portrait (*portrait parlé*), and the record of peculiar characteristics (such as tattoos and accents). By the end of the nineteenth century, the skeleton of the modern police file was already well in place in most of Europe. It quickly spread in the French colonies, and then elsewhere in the world, particularly in Latin America.⁹ Introducing his methods in prolific manuals (p. 801) bursting at the seams with detailed charts and illustrations, Bertillon did not tire of emphasizing that, despite the bewildering variety of means he espoused, “The goal is always identification.”¹⁰ J. Gabriel Ducry, a contemporary disciple of Bertillon’s, summarizes the aim of his own Bertillon-method manual as “finding and identifying the targeted person in a crowd.”¹¹

While Bertillon was central to the development of criminology, he was certainly not unique. Indeed, he worked within a milieu where science and at times pseudo-science were developing at rapid pace, cross-fertilizing with other upstarts searching for scientific

Police Records: An Intermedia Genre

ic credibility, notably statistics, sociology, anthropology, and psychoanalysis.¹² Bertillon's family was representative for the times—his father was a founding member of the Society for Statistics and an anthropometrist, while his brother was a statistician and demographer. (His mother, in a manner also representative for those times, and maybe for ours, is not mentioned in these biographies.)¹³ Other notable criminologists and scientists who influenced him and/or were influenced by him were Cesare Lombroso, Adolphe Quetelet, Francis Galton, and Hans Gross. What makes Bertillon, however, the central figure in our story is his lifelong preoccupation with police records. Bertillon started his work in the police force as a clerk and copyist and climbed up to be Chief of Criminal Identification for the Paris Police.¹⁴ His contributions on anthropometric measurements, early work on fingerprints, mugshots, and the development of a whole language for the spoken portrait all assure him a central place in the scientific study of criminology. But as Max H. Houch reminds us, "The central instrument of the [Bertillonage] system was not the camera but the filing cabinet."¹⁵ This is a point worth remembering because in the face of the cornucopia of arresting photographs left over from Bertillonage, one can easily forget the less visible technologies of archiving that tied all these different mediums and inventions together, and that were the backbone of (p. 802) the system. Bertillon was indeed singularly influential in shaping modern police archives and their records—thus his central place in our story.

This new methodology of the police record is amply documented in the unprecedented flourishing of a peculiar genre, the Bertillon-method manual. Pioneered by Bertillon himself, these manuals were also authored by the many disciples who made the pilgrimage to Bertillon's quarters not just from all of France but also from its colonies and from other countries and continents, to be trained in his methods.¹⁶ The manuals impressed and overwhelmed many a novice with the interminable list of details they mandated necessary for inclusion in the police record, the prescriptive precision of the vocabulary used, the long lists of abbreviations to be memorized that themselves take pages on end.¹⁷ In one of the most thorough examples of the genre, Ducry's *Manual-Vocabulary of the Spoken Portrait (Alphonse Bertillon Method)*, a Marseille chief of police shares the lessons learned during a training session in Paris with Bertillon himself.¹⁸ Each description of a facial feature takes at least a page filled with adjectives and then another page of rich illustrations. Some features, like the eyes, need more detail—four pages in minuscule print are dedicated to the adjectives recommended for the description of the "left iris."¹⁹ It can be "pale, yellow, orange, chestnut, or brown." Just the "pale," like each of the other colors, can itself be of different nuances: "cerulean, intermediary-violet, slate, (with or without pallor)."²⁰ Then consider the aureole, which could be "laced, concentric, ray-like," and itself of various nuances.²¹ After this treatise on all the nuances, shapes, and crenellations of the left iris, each other part of the eyes—eyebrows, eyelids, eyeballs, and orbits—receives two pages of text and a page of illustrations.²² This is overflowing yet tightly controlled, precise verbiage (Figure 44.1). Their obsessive preoccupation with language both defines these manuals and threatens their undoing into lists of more and more particular adjectives.

Police Records: An Intermedia Genre

lem that triggered Bertillon's invention of the "spoken portrait." This sea of photographs paralyzed the agent faced with a repeat flesh-and-bones criminal, not to mention with thousands of potential criminals in the crowd. How was he or she supposed to find the one photograph taken during a previous arrest amid the thousands in the archives if the criminal did as little as give a false name? The links between referent/criminal, name, and image were severed in a metropolis that teemed with fake identities, fugitives, transplants, nomads, immigrants, and other suspects. Photography was indeed called upon to restore those links in the mugshot, but the more mugshots were taken, the more the confusion in the police archives grew.

Here is where Bertillon intervened. He was intent on restoring that link between image, (im)proper (fake) name, and referent/criminal. The test of his whole system rested on whether this humble clerk could identify a disguised repeat criminal among the thousands of mugshots held in police archives. It took him years. To reach his goal, he standardized the motley criminal pictures into the carefully measured standardized profile and frontal shots which he first called stereometric portraits and which we have since taken to calling mugshots. But these modern mugshots did not replace either the spoken portraits or the anthropometric measurements. On the contrary, their functioning was predicated on their precise linking to the verbal and numerical representations of the criminal, as represented by the Bertillon system police record sheet, which contains on one page all these different mediums. The logorrhea of the spoken portrait and the obsessive precision of anthropometric measurements were not superseded by the proliferation of photographs in the police archives. If anything, they grew. As the modern photographic image made its entrance into policing, language doubled its forces to rein it in.

The mugshot then neither supplanted language nor just added one more medium to the standard police record. Instead, the mugshot was extensively marked by words and figures, and worked only in conjunction with them. Moreover, these visible markings were just the tip of the iceberg of an elaborate system of description that translated the visual into language, a system rooted in a multisensory, yet still language-dominated, theory of memory:

This image, this visual document (*document visuel*) will not manage to register itself in the brain except to the extent that this organ will be equally capable of imprinting the traits and characters both by optical memory and by language. Modern psychologists teach us that the memory of an object is composed of the result of the visual, chromatic, tactile and auditory impression. ... In the same way we will say that as long as a distinguishing characteristic of external anatomy that could on its own distinguish an individual among thousands has not received a name which allows it to be stored in the memory ... it will remain as if unperceived and as if nonexistent. This has been said a long time ago: we don't think but what we can express through words. The same happens with sights: we cannot re-view in our mind that which we cannot describe.²⁹

(p. 807) Exposed at length in the manuals, this system of describing informs each carefully chosen abbreviation marked on the mugshot, its written marks as well as all its precise

Police Records: An Intermedia Genre

dimensions, the carefully measured positions of the bodies of suspects and photographers, the time of the day and amount of light to be allowed in. It also informs, most importantly if least visibly, the strategies of looking at the photos and at other humans, without which, Bertillon never tires of reminding his readers, the whole system founders, as the 90,000 photographs capturing all of Paris's criminal population remain illegible.³⁰ His disciple Ducry had learned the lesson: "The photographic portrait will become a research and identification instrument that is more efficacious the more the agents will be familiar with the way of using, analyzing, describing, knowing it by heart, extracting in one word, everything that one can extract: since we must, in order to see (*voir*) well or even better to perceive (*percevoir*) well what one sees, know in advance which are the points to 'watch' (*regarder*)."³¹

While the striking pages of collated noses, ears, chins, and eyes can easily mislead us into believing in the primacy of the visual in the early police record, from its very first page the record in fact more accurately frames the picture within the textual and numeric mediums it functioned in. At a closer view, even the decontextualized photographs carry the reminders of their intermedia functions. First, each photo comes elaborately filed in albums, categorized according to words naming shapes, colors, and sizes. Furthermore, even on the photograph itself, a close look reveals a plethora of information written in initials and abbreviations. (Figure 44.3). These were not accidental markings: the list indicating the kind of information that should be marked on the photographs itself takes more than one page, and it includes nuances of the left iris, beard, hair, and indications as to the details of the ears, nose, eyes, that would not be visible with the naked eye on the photo.³² The results are strikingly marked criminal faces, with incomprehensible "tattoos" in clerkish calligraphy. The photograph is an intermedia artefact through and through: on its surface, in its carefully measured dimensions, in its framing within the record, and in its reception by the agent carefully trained in the art of viewing, reviewing, recognizing, and describing.



Figure 44.3 Marked up photographs: Eyes, J. Gabriel Ducry, *Manuel-vocabulaire du "Portrait parle" (méthode Alphonse Bertillon)* (Marseille, France: Moulot, 1909), Plate XIII.

There were fantasies of trading all this wordy and shady mess for clean combinations of the ten digits—“the measurement in centimeters is preferable to the most perfect vocabulary,” Bertillon sighs.³³ A disciple, R. A. Reiss, even proposes to translate the spoken portrait into numeric codes, reaching out to our computerized future.³⁴ But at the time, these were just dreams, and they remained based on the messy words and images coded in the figures. So the imperfect solution was to stick to words, and continue to pile up more and more precise adjectives, and then take clearer images. Finally, if the mental representation still did not fully yoke the image to the verbal, the agent needed to get to work on yoking image and words by intermedia ropes. Or more likely, the threads that bind these intermedia files, the staple that brings together the photo and the writing paper, the ink mark on photo paper, the measuring tape that leaves its (p. 808) (p. 809) shadow everywhere, seen or unseen. We’ve seen these manual-dictionaries translate everyday and literary language into police language; French to myriad other languages; language to code. Yet their foundational translation operated from visual to verbal.

In the police record, word, image, and number were called upon to tie together the shifty human figure into an unmoving representation that could double as identification. The marked-up mugshot was attached to the spoken portrait, both filed and at the ready to capture its referent in their intermedia net. As pioneers like Alan Sekula, Christian Phéline, and others more recently have brilliantly shown, photography was a crucial medium of the modern police file, shaping it from its birth.³⁵ Yet I believe it is important to remember, as these peculiar words often fade into their crowded acronyms, while the photographs catch our attention through their striking black and whiteness, that the system was intermedia and language-dominated. So in the second part of the article we will turn to the less visible but highly influential textual genres that shaped the modern police

record: biography, confession, the detective story, and the novel. However, before moving on, it seems important to note that the particular intermedia net created to capture identity in the police record did not remain restricted to its original criminal subject but was expanded for use regarding a variety of populations—nomads, migrants, foreigners, workers, the colonized, and even the “picturesque” of anthropological studies.³⁶

44.2 The Long Shadow of Bertillon’s Police Records: National and Colonial Biopower

As mentioned before, Bertillonage did not develop in isolation but in synergy with the culture and politics of its time. For example, the commerce between early policing and anthropology was neither accidental nor unnoticed. On the contrary, Bertillon acknowledged his debt to the social sciences, “especially Anthropology,” in tackling the great challenge of representing identity.³⁷ He was particularly interested in anthropometry and took pride in the adaptation and improvements he brought to contemporary (p. 810) practices. He also advertised “new formats, poses and scales,” which he prescribed for judicial photography for the use of “amateur photographers” interested in “ethnic, professional, or picturesque types,” and particularly recommended the conventions of the mugshot—its right profile, frontal shot, and strong links to anthropometrics, to “anthropologists,” so that they would forge a common scientific language.³⁸ The latter did not wait long to give course to this invitation. The mugshots and anthropometric measurements taken during an 1895 French anthropological expedition to study Kurdish people closely echo Bertillon’s language:

The general physiognomy and morphology of an individual, of a family, or of a race can without a doubt be established through direct observation and can be described with the help of qualifications, as well as by numerous photographs all taken with the same aspect—that is to say—frontal or head on—and profile of well-chosen subjects. Yet these documents, which must be thought of as indispensable, would remain incomplete if not accompanied by multiple and rigorous measurements. The proportions of the body, the shape of the eyes, of the nose, of the face, and of the head in general, can only be known and studied thanks to anthropometric research.³⁹

Note how seamlessly the transition from individual to family group to race occurs in one introductory sentence that sets the assumptions. Then visual observation, verbal description, and anthropometric measurement are also seamlessly yoked here in capturing the human subject together. Any one of them taken in isolation would fail at its task; hence the records are necessarily intermedia. Their creation necessitates the coordination of a whole *dispositif* of technologies from writing (describing, labeling, indexing), to photography, to the tools of anthropometry—such as calipers and measurement tapes. Indeed, in a document titled “For the Use of Travelers and Residents in Uncivilized Lands, the first two items recommended for the traveler were “1. Calipers ... 2. Measuring tapes ... several should be taken, as they are soon rendered illegible by the grease and filth of the subjects measured.”⁴⁰ Soon they were to be paired with a camera fitted with a “dummy lens”

Police Records: An Intermedia Genre

to distract the “camera shy natives” who also “regarded physical measurements almost invariably with suspicion.”⁴¹ In *Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History*, Susan Meiselas shows the resulting mugshot-like pictures (face and profile pairs), taken in 1890–1894 during anthropometric expeditions led by Ernest Chantre, future author of the book, *Kurdes* (1897), a close contemporary of Bertillon’s (p. 811) writings.⁴² These anthropological mug shots were still highly sought after in 1934, when a plan for a Field Museum expedition notes the excitement at the ability to photograph and measure women given the participation of a female anthropologist, Winifred Smeaton, “qualified to do anthropometric work.”⁴³

Technologies honed to capture the figure of the repeat criminal (recidivist) by the police file have been appropriated for a variety of other purposes. There was an easy transfer back and forth from the anthropometric measurement of criminals to the anthropometric measurements of foreign populations or racial types as done by anthropologists and colonial powers—sometimes hand in hand. In “Indigenous Identities and Colonial Police,” Ilse About shows how the introduction of specialized police services for identification, particularly in Algeria, “was not just aimed at reinforcing the identification of suspects and of criminals in order to improve the repression of criminality, but it was equally a central stage in the toughening of security policies imposed on indigenous populations.”⁴⁴ The development of police identification as standardized through Bertillonage is an integral part of “a history, largely unwritten, of the French involvement in the forceful definition of indigenous identity.”⁴⁵ Identification appears here as the fulcrum on which the language of the police file turns from its touted recording role to an Austinian performative role. Rather than just recording individuals at a particular time and place in their lives, the police file appears interested in fixing identity. This was already the case in the attempt to overcome the variety of disguises and temporal changes of the Parisian suspect to create the identifying card of the *recidiviste*, “the repeat criminal.” The link between identification and identity formation, already visible in the first Bertillon manuals, takes off in the colonies, where whole new taxonomies appear.⁴⁶ Some will be imported back to the metropolis. In Indochina and Maghreb, multiple types of personal identity cards appear and prefigure the forms of personalized control applied to foreigners in interwar France.⁴⁷ Police officers from Mexico to Maghreb to Indochina argued that Bertillon-style identification should be adopted to assist with their oft-mentioned difficulty of reading “the indigenous race [composed] of individuals of uniform and little varied type.”⁴⁸ Once again, Bertillonage was appropriated not just as a technology of taking mugshots or spoken portraits or anthropomorphic measurements but also as a technique of reading a reality that proved a challenge to the untrained eye. Indeed, it is not accidental that even before their generalized (p. 812) acceptance in France and Europe, Bertillon’s identification files were rapidly disseminated in the colonies and in Latin America.⁴⁹

Similarly, it is fitting that the technology that finally superseded the complications of Bertillonage—the fingerprint—was rooted in colonialism, and then exported back to Europe.⁵⁰ In famously arguing for the scientific basis and utility of fingerprinting in front of the Anthropological Society in 1889, Francis Galton went back in great detail to the colonial administrator’s vision difficulties in “distinguishing Indian natives’ features.” He then

added, “Whatever difficulty may be felt in the identification of Hindoos is experienced in at least an equal degree in that of the Chinese resident in our colonies and settlements, who to European eyes are still more alike than the Hindoos, and in whose names there is still less variety.”⁵¹ Fingerprinting was proposed as a solution to this visual disorder rampant in colonialism—the inability to read and distinguish different faces, or human illiteracy. Indeed, as Simon Cole shows in his history of fingerprinting, Galton “did not conceive of fingerprinting as replacement for Bertillonage,” which is in fact what was to happen. “He strongly believed that Britain should adopt the Bertillon system. Instead, he viewed fingerprinting as a tool for colonial governance.”⁵² However, just as judicial photography, anthropometric measurements, and spoken portraits easily spread from the representation of criminals to that of nomads, migrants, workers, travelers, and finally, to anyone carrying a passport or identity card, so the fingerprint, first tried on Bengali workers, came to identify European criminals, and in its latest uses in border control, any citizen in transit.

44.3 The Police File, the Detective Story, and the Novel

Despite its peculiar identifying marks—fingerprints, anthropometric measurements, standardized language—the police file is a genre with permeable boundaries. While its changing shape has been strongly influenced by shifting political, cultural, and scientific climates, it also developed in close relationship to other genres of writing, such as the detective story, the novel, and biography.⁵³ It will come as no surprise that of all literary (p. 813) writing, the modern police file is most closely related to the detective story. Criminology, the genre of detective fiction, and even the word “detective” emerged in the West around the same time, the middle of the nineteenth century. There are many theories as to why this sudden need arose for the word in the English language, as for the genre in general.⁵⁴ As we have seen, the challenge of identification posed by unprecedented urbanization, migration, and the anonymity of the modern crowd is a recurring theme in the literature. Carlo Ginzburg has memorably argued that there are also underlying similarities between the logic of the detective story and criminology in their attraction to the conjectural paradigm—their reliance on a science of reading seemingly insignificant details/clues in a world where deceiving appearances challenge straightforward sense-making.⁵⁵ Set in nineteenth-century Paris, Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Murders in Rue Morgue,” the short story that is canonically considered the first of the genre, contains long, pretend ad litteram quotations from the contemporary Parisian police file dealing with the identification of the criminal.⁵⁶ Presumed to be “a foreigner,” maybe “a woman” by all the witnesses who hear voices through the walls, the murderer turns out to be the ultimate other, an orangutan from the colonies.⁵⁷ Symptomatically, the first Western detective story’s victims were female, the murderer was a beast from the colonies, and the police files struggled with identification and needed special reading “acumen.”⁵⁸ Indeed, the quotations from the files only bewilder the uninitiated reader through the utter cacophony of the witness testimonies—“Was certain it was not French. Could not be sure it was a man’s voice.

Police Records: An Intermedia Genre

It might have been a woman's." "Was convinced by the intonation that the speaker was an Italian."⁵⁹ "Is sure that it is not the voice of an Englishman. Appeared to be that of a German."⁶⁰ "The shrill voice was of an Englishman—is sure of this." "Thinks it the voice of a Russian."⁶¹ The quotation from the police file is then already a key stylistic and plot device, one that signals the authority and power of the narrator and of his detective to access the confounding information and to perform a knowledgeable reading. Significantly, the first detective story is a lesson in reading the police files of its time. This is not unique to Dupin, Poe's detective. (p. 814) Sherlock Holmes, the other early hero of the genre, shows standard contempt for policemen; yet when in a pinch, he does productive research in police archives.⁶² Once again, he manages to decipher in the police files the key to the mystery that the police themselves fail to see. As Bertillon knew, detecting was evidently not just about creating and archiving the files but also developing particular methods of reading and sense-making. These special reading methods, whether they are called Bertillonage, Ginzburg's conjectural method, Poe's acumen, or Conan Doyle's science of detection, come with convoluted theories and practices, for nothing was what it seemed any longer. The relationship between words, images, and the peculiar referent they had the job to not just represent but also identify—the criminal—had itself become highly suspect.

If the police file standardly uses different mediums and disciplines to reinforce each other in their identification of the criminal, literature was more open to probe the disjunctions and complexities in these intermedia portraits. A case in point is modernist master Alfred Doblin's experimental literary cases of women and crime in Weimar Germany.⁶³ Indeed, as Simon Stern notes, "a series of books published in Weimar Germany featured true-crime narratives that mined the actual case files, combining an array of visual and documentary materials."⁶⁴ In analyzing one such case study of two women accused of lesbianism and murdering their husbands, Lewis shows how Doblin used images and graphs (placed in an envelope affixed with glue to the cover of the book as an addendum), as well as the psychoanalytic case study genre as a whole, not to authenticate the police indicting caricature of the women but rather to complicate their portrait.⁶⁵ His intermedia addendum draws attention both to the limits of the legal representations of the suspects and to his own literary representation within his own more traditional textual narrative. The intermedia aspect of the files was also been appropriated by writers to attract their audiences to a more interactive readership model. Thus, the United States saw the emergence of the crime-file genre in the 1930s, whereby writers presented their detective fiction in the form of police case files. Bound in paperboards with a cord binding, these dossiers, "artefacts rather than books," included actual clues, such as cigarette stubs, a bloodstained section of curtain, phials of medicine and perfume, and of course, photographs.⁶⁶ Tellingly, the analyses of these (p. 815) literary appropriations of police files all underscore their emergence at a time when not just the representation of the criminal but also literary representation finds itself in crisis; thus its attraction to borrowing not just plots but also formal devices from other mediums and discourses.⁶⁷

To a certain extent, the longer forms such as the novella or novel expanded and nuanced this crisis of representation. Another related, if distinctly articulated, problem that is introduced through the relationship between literary and police writing is the question of complicity and subversion.⁶⁸ Probably the most well-known study on the novel in this context is D. A. Miller's *The Novel and the Police*.⁶⁹ Miller's argument is a long development of Michel Foucault's thesis, in "The Lives of Infamous Men," that "literature forms part of that great system of constraint by which the West compelled the everyday to bring itself into discourse."⁷⁰ In his close analysis of nineteenth-century British novels Miller aimed to demonstrate how "the most unsayable, the most secret, the most intolerable, the shameless," was brought to light and exposed in the novel.⁷¹ As such, the novel appears in Miller's reading as a more insidious extension of the police file. At the opposite end of the spectrum in his assessment of the novel's relationship to authoritative discourse stands Mikhail Bakhtin, whose "Epic and the Novel" seminally cast the novel as a dialogic and open form.⁷² Beyond any simplified black-white verdicts on the relationship between the novel and policing, however, what Bakhtin offered us was a dynamic understanding of the relationship of literary and extra-literary discourses—such as the novel and the police file, where "the boundaries are not laid up in heaven," but instead there is a lot of overlap, borrowing, influence, and appropriation.⁷³ My chapter is tributary to this dynamic and dialogic understanding of genre, while extending it to the question of medium.

(p. 816) In so doing, it responds to a growing preoccupation with the role of the visual and media archeology in law and criminology.⁷⁴

44.4 The Police File and Biography

The defining preoccupation with identification in the modern police file should not blind us to its other ambitions. Some of the earliest police records preserved were indeed less interested in capturing a criminal/suspect, as the criminals were already imprisoned, or were subject of long-term police surveillance. This is the case of documents published by Michel Foucault and Arlette Farge, documents from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century archives, including the Bastille archives.⁷⁵ As Foucault notes, these records give sketchy elements toward biographies that, had it not been for their subjects' encounter with the law, would never have been written.⁷⁶ Robert Darnton's illuminating study of some of the earliest surveillance files on intellectuals during pre-Revolutionary France, a time where the very category of intellectuals was being formed, also shows police files that spent little time on identification and much of their time on the story (*histoire*) of the subject.⁷⁷ The police inspector, d'Hémery, "used standard forms—large folio sheets with six headings printed in bold type: name, age, birthplace, description, address, and *histoire*. ... The rubric *histoire* provided the most room for situating the writers, and d'Hémery accorded it the largest space on his printed forms."⁷⁸ Darnton notes that "[t]he files contain as many remarks about the quality of the authors' style as about the character of their religious and political opinions," showing a "combination of literary sensitivity and bureaucratic orderliness that would be unthinkable in most police headquarters today."⁷⁹ The

Police Records: An Intermedia Genre

histoire often included rich diachronic detail as well as characterization, which again brings it closer to the genre of biography.

This is not surprising but rather is in line with a penchant for biography that is discernible at certain moments in the history of Western criminology. The great reform of the modern penitentiary, which originated in eighteenth-century England, “aimed to (p. 817) reshape the life story of each criminal by the application of pleasure and pain within a planned framework. ... Their aim was the reformation of character through the controlled alteration of material circumstances through time.”⁸⁰ As a result, criminologists and other penitentiary reformers became extremely interested in recording and rewriting the story of a criminal life. Whether they posited their subject as an inborn criminal, a victim of the modern environment, or a free-willing delinquent, the major schools of nineteenth-century criminology had recourse to various narratives—ranging from genealogies to sociologically or psychologically inclined biographies—to express their views of the criminal.⁸¹

However, this biographical interest that sometimes informs Western criminological treatises or penitentiary reform programs is less visible in the more applied genre of the police file, which was mainly used as a practical tool in actual police searches for the perpetrators of particular crimes. Indeed, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Western police file was increasingly developed as a technology of identification: the file aimed to capture not the detailed story of the criminal, his or her genealogy, life conditions, or psychological development, but rather the identifying characteristics of the individual body. This gradual turn away from biography in the modern Western police file is particularly salient in contrast with the direction taken by a powerful offshoot of the genre, the Soviet-era secret police personal files, in wide use throughout Eastern Europe, Russia, and Central Asia. As I have shown in detail in *Police Aesthetics*, whereas Western twentieth-century criminal records are usually limited to the investigation of a particular crime, the Soviet personal file is typically concerned with the extensive biography of the suspect.⁸² Nicolae Steinhardt summarized this condition: “you are not accused for what you have done, but rather for who you are.”⁸³ In the Soviet bloc the secret police file programmatically developed as a biography that shadowed and often took over the actual life of the subject, unlike the identification-driven Western police record.

(p. 818) The opposite trend away from biography is visible in the development through time of a defining rubric of the Western police file, the distinguishing characteristics. In the nineteenth century, under the influence of phrenology and physiognomy, descriptions of the criminal often tried to link certain body characteristics to character (such as a certain skull shape with degeneration or criminality). With the adoption of the Bertillon system throughout Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, body markers were no longer recorded in the police file with the expectation that they could reveal anything about the character; instead, they were chosen for their ability to distinguish one person from another.⁸⁴ The classic apex of this development is the fingerprint, undoubtedly the chief identifying feature throughout the twentieth century. Among newer technologies, iris scans provide a particularly fit illustration of this trend from symptomatic to synec-

doctic readings of the body's distinguishing characteristics. The eye, traditionally seen as the window to the soul, is no longer probed for any clue about character. Instead, the eye is chosen as a site, analogous to the fingertip, where random peculiarities of shape and color converge to create unique patterns that distinguish each individual from others in what Allan Sekula memorably described as the modern body archive.⁸⁵ True to its original Bertillon model, the modern Western police file largely steered clear of biographical ambitions at recording or rewriting individual biographies. Rather than biography, it had a deeper kinship with a closely contemporary genre: detective fiction. They emerged at the same time, in the second half of the 19th century, and shared a preoccupation with identifying the elusive criminal in rapidly modernizing metropolises and colonies. Unlike the detective story, however, the police file developed as a fundamentally intermedia toolkit of identification. Its tools (the mugshot, the fingerprint, the iris scan) easily spread back and forth from its original subject—the repeat criminal—to colonial subjects, minorities, migrants, and lately, all the way to the general population.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to the participants of the Law and Humanities Conference, May 18, 2018, Stanford, California, for helpful feedback. Special thanks go to Simon Stern for erudite and insightful editorial comments.

Further Reading

Brooks, Peter. *Troubling Confessions: Speaking Guilt in Law & Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

Cole, Simon A. *Suspect Identities: A History of Fingerprinting and Criminal Identification*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Finn, Jonathan M. *Capturing the Criminal Image: From Mug Shot to Surveillance Society*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.

(p. 819) Foucault, Michel. "The Lives of Infamous Men." In *Power, Truth, Strategy*, ed. Meaghan Morris and Paul Patton, 76–91. Sydney, Australia: Feral Publications, 1979.

Gitelman, Lisa. *Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014.

Maxwell, William J. *F.B. Eyes: How J. Edgar Hoover's Ghostreaders Framed African American Literature*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015.

Sekula, Allan. "The Body and the Archive." *October* 39 (1986): 3–64.

Sengoopta, Chandak. *Imprint of the Raj: How Fingerprinting Was Born in Colonial India*. London: Macmillan, 2003.

Police Records: An Intermedia Genre

Vatulescu, Cristina. "Arresting Biographies: The Secret Police File in the Soviet Union and Romania." In *Police Aesthetics: Literature, Film, and the Secret Police in Soviet Times*, 27–54. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010.

Vismann, Cornelia. *Files: Law and Media Technology*. Trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008.

Notes:

(¹) Dick Higgins, "Intermedia" (1965, 1981), *Leonardo* 34, no. 1 (2001): 49–54.

(²) It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the new legislation against repeat criminals, or recidivists, as a catalyst for identification and Bertillonage. See, for example, Pierre Piazza, "Les recidivists en fiches," in *Aux origines de la police scientifique: Alphonse Bertillon, précurseur de la science du crime*, ed. Pierre Piazza (Paris: Karthala, 2011), 26–49.

(³) Higgins was aware of Coleridge, and referenced him. Higgins, "Intermedia," 52.

(⁴) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Literary Remains: Coleridge on Spenser," 4 vols., *Literary Remains of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Henry Nelson Coleridge (1812), <http://spenserians.cath.vt.edu/TextRecord.php?action=GET&textsid=35813>.

(⁵) Ibid.

(⁶) Mark Maguire, "The Birth of Biometric Security," *Anthropology Today* 25 (2009): 9–14.

(⁷) Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 43.

(⁸) New preoccupation and laws regarding repeat offenders—recidivists—further increased the importance of identification and the imperative that it function irrespective of the effects of time over the human body.

(⁹) In 1895 Bertillon boasted that his methods had also been adopted as far as "Russia, the US, Argentina, and Tunisia." Alphonse Bertillon, *La photographie judiciaire* (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1890), 2. A Bertillon-style manual was published in Spanish in Santiago de Chile as early as 1900 and adapted for use in the colonies. Pedro N. Barros Ovalle, *Manual de antropometría criminal i jeneral, escrito según el sistema de A. Bertillon* (Santiago de Chile: Blanchard-Chessi, 1900). His work had also been translated into English and published in the United States and Canada as early as 1896. Alphonse Bertillon, *Legal photography*, trans. Paul R. Brown (New York, 1897); *Signaletic Instructions* (New York: Werner, 1896).

(¹⁰) *Photographie judiciaire*, 3.

(¹¹) J. Gabriel Ducry, *Manuel-vocabulaire du "Portrait parlé" (méthode Alphonse Bertillon)* (Marseille, France: Moullot, 1909), 6.

Police Records: An Intermedia Genre

⁽¹²⁾ For a fascinating argument about the emergence of a conjectural mode in the decades between 1870 and 1890, see Carlo Ginzburg, “Morelli, Freud, and Sherlock Holmes: Clues and the Scientific Method,” in *The Sign of Three: Dupin, Holmes, Peirce*, ed. Umberto Eco and Thomas A. Sebeok (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 81–118. Ginzburg argues that this common semiotic was based on the reading of accidentally left traces/clues in psychoanalysis, detecting, and art connoisseurship.

⁽¹³⁾ Henry Rhodes, *Alphonse Bertillon* (London: Harrap, 1956), 27; Max H. Houch, *Forensic Science* (London: Praeger, 2007), 24.

⁽¹⁴⁾ His most infamous mistake (in the expert testimony he offered on the handwriting of Alfred Dreyfus, a testimony which contributed to the latter’s unjust sentence) was also directly linked to his preoccupation with records. Roger Mansuy and Laurent Mazliak, “L’affaire Bertillon,” in *Aux origines de la police scientifique*, ed. Pierre Piazza (Paris: Karthala, 2011), 349–372.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Houch, *Forensic Science*, 27.

⁽¹⁶⁾ See for instance Diego Galeano and Mercedes Garcia Ferrari, “Cartographie du bertillonage. Le système anthropométrique en Amérique Latine: circuits de diffusion, usages et résistances,” in *Aux origines de la police*, ed. Pierre Piazza (Paris: Karthala, 2011), 308–331.

⁽¹⁷⁾ In fact, Houch attributes the decline of the Bertillon method not just to the usual explanation of its supplanting by fingerprint identification, but also to the inability of the masses of police agents to replicate Bertillon’s overly exacting prescriptions. Houch, *Forensic Science*, 27.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Ducry, *Manuel-vocabulaire*.

⁽¹⁹⁾ *Ibid.*, 11–14.

⁽²⁰⁾ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁽²¹⁾ *Ibid.*

⁽²²⁾ *Ibid.*, 47–52.

⁽²³⁾ *Ibid.*; R. A. Reiss, *Manuel du portrait parlé (signalement) (méthode Alphonse Bertillon) à l’usage de la police, avec vocabulaire français, allemand, italien et anglais, et code télégraphique du portrait parlé* (Paris: G. Roustan, 1914). One of the first English translations of *Instructions signalétiques* emphasized this focus on verbal descriptions to the point of changing the title: Alphonse Bertillon, *Alphonse Bertillon’s Instructions for Taking Descriptions for the Identification of Criminals, and Others* (Chicago: American Bertillon Prison Bureau, 1889).

⁽²⁴⁾ “Analyse descriptive de la figure humaine,” in *La photographie judiciaire* (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1890), 81–104.

Police Records: An Intermedia Genre

(²⁵) Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39, no. 4 (1986): 3-64, 4.

(²⁶) Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 13.

(²⁷) Tom Gunning, "Tracing the Individual Body," in *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, ed. Leo Charney and Vanessa Schwartz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 15-45, 19.

(²⁸) Sekula, "Body and Archive," 7; Gunning, "Tracing the Individual Body," 19.

(²⁹) Bertillon, *Photographie judiciaire*, 36.

(³⁰) *Ibid.*, 104.

(³¹) Ducry, *Manuel-vocabulaire*, 3.

(³²) *Ibid.*, 63-64.

(³³) Bertillon, *Photographie judiciaire*, 88.

(³⁴) See "the telegraphic code of the spoken portrait." Reiss, *Manuel du portrait parlé*, 165.

(³⁵) Christian Phéline, *L'image accusatrice* (Laplume, France: Association de critique contemporaine en photographie, 1985); Sekula, "Body and Archive." Furthermore, Sekula makes the important argument that photography's involvement with the police has long been a repressed foundational chapter in the history of photography, the negative of the ceremonial bourgeois portrait.

(³⁶) For instance, "the anthropometric notebook for nomads," targeting Roma populations in France, "was inscribed as a prolongation of the methods and procedures that Bertillonage imposed on criminals starting with 1880." Emmanuel Filhol, "Le carnet anthropométrique des nomades," in *Aux origines de la police scientifique*, ed. Pierre Piazza (Paris: Karthala, 2011), 247-274, 249. When the law for the registration and identification of nomads was passed in France in 1912, Bertillon was immediately named part of a commission to see to its application.

(³⁷) Bertillon, *Photographie judiciaire*, 4.

(³⁸) *Ibid.*, 4-5.

(³⁹) Ernest Chantre, *Missions Scientifiques en Transcaucasie, Asie Mineure et Syrie 1890-1894*, vol. 6 (Lyon: Georg, 1895), x, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k57465931/f18.item.r=indispensable> (quoted in Susan Meiselas, *Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997), 8).

Police Records: An Intermedia Genre

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Dr. Beddoe, F. R. S., “For the Use of Travelers and Residents in Uncivilized Lands,” in *The Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (London: Royal Anthropological Institute, 1874) (quoted in Meiselas, *Kurdistan*, 4).

⁽⁴¹⁾ *The Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, 5th ed. (London: Royal Anthropological Institute, 1929) (quoted in Meiselas, *Kurdistan*, 4).

⁽⁴²⁾ Meiselas, *Kurdistan*, 7–9.

⁽⁴³⁾ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Ilse About, “Identités indigènes et police coloniale: L’introduction de l’anthropométrie judiciaire en Algérie, 1890–1910,” in *Aux origines de la police scientifique*, ed. Pierre Piazza (Paris: Karthala, 2011), 280–302, 281.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ *Ibid.*, 280.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ For an illuminating account of how racialized categories are “shuffled, reassigned, and remade” through paperwork, see Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Archival Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 35–37, 105–140. See also Camille Gear Rich’s chapter, “Racial Ambiguity Blues: Contemporary Challenges for Racialization Theory in the Twenty-First Century,” in this volume.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ About, “Identités indigènes et police coloniale,” 281.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ Galeano and Ferrari, “Cartographie du bertillonage,” 314.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ *Ibid.*, 326.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ For the fascinating history, see Chandak Sengoopta, *Imprint of the Raj: How Fingerprinting Was Born in Colonial India* (London: Macmillan, 2003).

⁽⁵¹⁾ Quoted in Simon A. Cole, *Suspect Identities: A History of Fingerprinting and Criminal Identification* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 76.

⁽⁵²⁾ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁽⁵³⁾ This is certainly not an exhaustive list of literary genres that have a deep relationship to the police file. For instance, autobiography and confession are extremely important in this context, and have been well studied. See, for example, Peter Brooks’s classic, *Troubling Confessions: Speaking Guilt in Law & Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). For a thought-provoking book that spans comparative analysis of Dostoyevsky’s use of false confession and confession in American jurisprudence, see Amy D. Ronner, *Dostoevsky and the Law* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2015). Attention also deserves to be paid to mutual influences with other legal genres, such as Andrew Benjamin Bricker’s chapter, “The Functions of Legal Literature and Case Reporting

Police Records: An Intermedia Genre

Before and After *Stare Decisis*,” in this volume, presented in a richly layered historical exposé.

(⁵⁴) For a recent review of the different explanations with an accompanying bibliography, see Lisa Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006).

(⁵⁵) Ginzburg, “Morelli, Freud, and Sherlock Holmes,” 88–101.

(⁵⁶) There are certainly precursors to the genre, such as Voltaire’s *Zadig* and the ancient Arabic stories that it is inspired from. For an illuminating discussion of a longer pre-history of the detective story, see *ibid.*

(⁵⁷) Edgar Allan Poe, “The Murders in Rue Morgue” (1841), in *The Complete Stories* (New York: Knopf, 1992), 483.

(⁵⁸) Indeed, the first three pages of the story risk losing their reader before the detective genre gets off the ground with an avowedly abstract theory of acumen, attention, and the kinds of mental features required for reading and disentangling the mystery to follow. *Ibid.*

(⁵⁹) *Ibid.*

(⁶⁰) *Ibid.*, 484.

(⁶¹) *Ibid.*, 485.

(⁶²) “The Five Orange Pips,” in Arthur Conan Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Novels and Stories*, vol. 1 (London: Bantam, 1986), 155–157.

(⁶³) Alison Lewis, “Alfred Döblin’s Literary Case Studies About Women and Crime in Weimar Germany,” in *A History of the Case Study: Sexology, Psychoanalysis, Literature*, ed. Birgit Lang, Joy Damousi, and Alison Lewis (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2015).

(⁶⁴) Simon Stern, “Law and Literature,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Criminal Law*, ed. Markus Dirk Dubber and Tatjana Hörnle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 111–129, 114. See also Todd Herzog, *Crime Stories: Criminalistic Fantasy and the Culture of Crisis in Weimar Germany* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009).

(⁶⁵) “The impact of the additional, non-literary adjuncts is to overdetermine the myriad causal factors leading to the crime.” Lewis, “Döblin’s Literary Case Studies,” 168.

(⁶⁶) William Reynolds, “Seven ‘Crimefiles’ of the 1930s,” *Clues* 1 (1980): 42–53. This interactive and immersive function of the intermedia dimension of police files resurfaced in the 1980s practice of adding “feelies” to video game packaging. See Karhulahti Veli-Matti, “Feelies: The Lost Art of Immersing the Narrative” (paper presented at the International DiGRA Nordic Conference). I am grateful to Simon Stern for this reference.

Police Records: An Intermedia Genre

(⁶⁷) Lewis argues that “literature faced challenges from many quarters, challenges that an empirical turn could not adequately address without a more radical reinvention of the parameters of literature itself.” Lewis, “Döblin’s Literary Case Studies,” 158. The subtitle of Herzog’s book, *Criminalistic Fantasy and the Culture of Crisis in Weimar Germany*, is also telling in this regard. Reynolds sees the “crime files” as an attempt to respond to the crisis of the mystery novel in the 1930s, when its days were “if not numbered, at any rate in the hands of the auditors.” Reynolds, “Seven ‘Crimefiles’ of the 1930s.”

(⁶⁸) For an in-depth consideration of the question of complicity in the relationship between law and literature, including a welcome deconstruction of the facile dichotomy between subversive literature and oppressive law, see Mark Sanders, *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002); *Ambiguities of Witnessing: Law and Literature in the Time of a Truth Commission* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007).

(⁶⁹) D. A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

(⁷⁰) Michel Foucault, “The Lives of Infamous Men,” in *Power, Truth, Strategy*, ed. Meaghan Morris and Paul Patton (Sydney, Australia: Feral Publications, 1979), 91.

(⁷¹) *Ibid.*

(⁷²) Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

(⁷³) *Ibid.*, 33.

(⁷⁴) For a review of the literature on the visual dimension of law and legal practice, media and crime, and visual criminology, see Ronnie Lippens, “Crime, Criminal Justice, and the Image,” *Visual Criminology* (2014), <https://visualcriminology.com/about/>. Among the helpful readers that span the diversity of these fields, see Costas Douzinas and Lynda Nead, *Law and the Image: the Authority of Art and the Aesthetics of Law* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Chris Greer, *Crime and Media* (London: Routledge, 2009); Keith J. Hayward and Mike Presdee, *Framing Crime: Cultural Criminology and the Image* (London: Routledge, 2010). See also related work: Carolin Behrmann’s chapter, “Law, Visual Studies, and Image History,” and Bennett Capers’s chapter, “Video as Text/Archive,” both in this volume.

(⁷⁵) Foucault, “Lives of Infamous Men”; Michel Foucault and Arlette Farge, *Disorderly Families: Infamous Letters from the Bastille Archives* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).

(⁷⁶) Foucault, “Lives of Infamous Men,” 79.

(⁷⁷) Robert Darnton, “A Police Inspector Sorts his Files: The Anatomy of the Republic of Letters,” in *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985).

(⁷⁸) Ibid., 160–162.

(⁷⁹) Ibid., 157.

(⁸⁰) John Bender, *Imagining the Penitentiary* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987), 22–23.

(⁸¹) Peter Becker argues that in nineteenth-century Germany criminologists used biography to describe the *Gauner*, the professional criminal and volitional wrongdoer, and genealogies to describe the degenerate or inborn criminal. Peter Becker, “Criminological Language and Prose from Late Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Century,” in *Crime and Culture: An Historical Perspective*, ed. Amy Gilman Srebnick and René Lévy (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2005), 23–36, 32–33. Elsewhere in Europe, there seems to have been quite a mix of these narratives in criminological attempts to describe criminals. While theories of inborn criminality were ultimately superseded by more sociological approaches to crime, in practice there seemed to have been significant mixtures and dialogues between various criminological approaches. Thus Cesare Lombroso, the most famous proponent of the inborn criminality theory, confessed admiration for Alphonse Bertillon, the father of modern policing. Christian Phéline, “L’image accusatrice,” *Les Cahiers de la Photographie* 17 (1985): 72, 1–169. In some cases, one person could represent very different criminological trends, as in the famous case of Francis Galton, who was an early proponent of eugenics and also the inventor of the fingerprint. Sekula, “Body and Archive,” 34–50.

(⁸²) See Cristina Vatulescu, “Arresting Biographies: The Secret Police File in the Soviet Union and Romania,” in *Police Aesthetics: Literature, Film, and the Secret Police in Soviet Times* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010).

(⁸³) Nicolae Steinhardt, *Jurnalul Fericirii* (Cluj, Romania: Dacia, 1997), 240.

(⁸⁴) Sekula, “Body and Archive,” 30, 33–35.

(⁸⁵) Ibid., 10.

Cristina Vatulescu

Cristina Vatulescu is Associate Professor of Comparative Literature at New York University. Her book, *Police Aesthetics: Literature, Film and the Secret Police* (Stanford University Press, 2010), a study of the relationships between cultural and policing practices in twentieth-century Eastern Europe, won the Heldt Prize and the Choice Outstanding Academic Title Award. She is also co-editor of *The Svetlana Boym Reader* (Bloomsbury, 2018) and a *Perspectives on Europe* special issue on “Secrecy” (2014). Her articles have appeared in *Law & Literature*, *diacritics*, *Comparative Literature*, *Poetics Today*, and the *Brooklyn Rail*. Cristina is currently working on a project entitled *Silences, Fictions, Etc.: The Challenges of Reading an Archival Revolution*.

